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THE

Merry Wives of Windſor.

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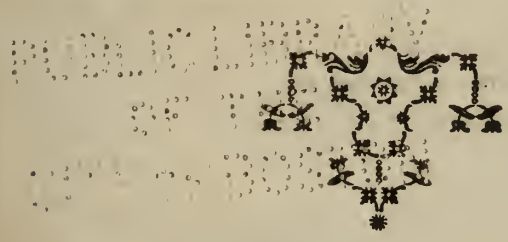

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M DCC LXXVIII.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

MEN.

Sir JOHN FALSTAFF.
FENTON.
SHALLOW.
SLENDER.
Mr. PAGE.
Mr. FORD.
Sir HUGH EVANS.
Dr. CAIUS.

Hoſt of the Garter.
BARDOLPH.
PISTOL.
NYM.
ROBIN.
SIMPLE.
RUGBY.

WOMEN.

Mrs. PAGE.
Mrs. FORD.

Mrs. ANNE PAGE.
Mrs. QUICKLY.

Servants to Page, Ford, &c.

SCENE, WINDSOR.

THE

Merry Wives of Windsor.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *before* Page's *House*, *in* Windsor.

Enter Justice Shallow, Slender, *and* Sir Hugh Evans.

Shal. SIR Hugh, persuade me not; I will make a Star-Chamber matter of it: if he were twenty Sir John Falstaffs, he shall not abuse Robert Shallow, Esquire.

Slen. In the county of Gloucester, justice of peace, and Coram.

Shal. Ay, cousin Slender, and Custalorum.

Slen. Ay, and Rotulorum too; and a gentleman born, Master Parson, who writes himself Armigero, to any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation—Armigero.

Shal. Ay, that I do, and have done, any time, these three hundred years.

Slen. All his successors, gone before him, have done't: and all his ancestors, that come after him, may: they may give the dozen white Luces, in their coat.

Shal. It is an old coat.

Eva. The dozen white Lowses do become an old coat well; it agrees well, passant; it is a familiar beast to man, and signifies love.

Slen. I may quarter, coz.

Shal. You may, by marrying.

Eva. It is marring indeed, if he quarter it.

Shal. Not a whit.

Eva. Yes, per lady; if he has a quarter of your coat, there is but three skirts for yourself, in my simple conjectures; but that is all one: if Sir John Falstaff have committed disparagements upon you, I am of the church, and will be glad to do my benevolence, to make atonements and compromises between you.

Shal. The council shall hear it; it is a riot.

Eva. It is not meet the council hear of a riot; there is no fear of Got in a riot: the council, look you, shall desire to hear the fear of Got, and not to hear a riot; take your vizaments in that.

Shal. Ha! o' my life, if I were young again, the sword should end it.

Eva. It is petter that friends is the sword should end it; and there is also another device in my prain, which, peradventure, prings good discretions with it: there is Anne Page, which is daughter to Master George Page, which is pretty virginity.

Slen. Mrs. Anne Page? she has brown hair, and speaks small, like a woman.

Eva. It is that fery person for all the orld, as just as you will desire: and seven hundred pounds of monies, and gold, and silver, as her grandsire upon his death-bed give her, when she is able to overtake seventeen years old: it were a good motion, if we leave our pribbles and prabbles, and desire a marriage between Master Abraham Slender, and Mrs. Anne Page.

Slen. Did her grandsire leave her seven hundred pounds?

Eva. Ay, and her father is make her a petter penny.

Slen. I know the young gentlewoman: she has good gifts.

Eva. Seven hundred pounds and possibilities is goot gifts.

Shal. Well; let us see, honest Mr. Page; is Falstaff there?

Eva. Shall I tell you a lye? I do despise a lyar, as I do despise one that is false; as I despise one that is not true. The knight, Sir John, is there: and I beseech you be ruled by your well-wishers. I will peat the door [*Knocks.*] for Master Page. What, hoa! Got bless your house here.

Enter Mr. Page.

Page. Who's there?

Eva. Here's Got's plessing and your friend, and Justice Shallow: and here's young Master Slender, that peradventure shall tell you another tale, if matters grow to your likings.

Page. I am glad to see your worship's well—I thank you for my venison, Master Shallow.

Shal. Master Page, I am glad to see you: much good do it your good heart; I wish'd your venison better; it was ill kill'd. How doth good Mrs. Page? And I thank you always with my heart, la; with my heart. Is Sir John Falstaff here?

Page. Sir, he's within; and I would I could do a good office between you!

Eva. It is spoke as a Christians ought to speak.

Shal. He hath wrong'd me, Master Page.

Page. Sir, he doth in some sort confess it.

Shal. If it be confess'd, it is not redress'd; is not that so, Master Page? He hath wrong'd me, indeed he hath, at a word he hath; believe me, Robert Shallow, Esquire, saith, he is wrong'd.

Page. Here comes Sir John.

Enter Sir John Falstaff, Bardolph, Nym, *and* Pistol.

Fal. Now, Master Shallow, you'll complain of me to the king?

Shal. Knight, you have beaten my men, kill'd my deer, and broke open my lodge.

Fal. But not kiss'd your keeper's daughter.

Shal. Tut, a pin; this shall be answer'd.

Fal. I will answer it, straight; I have done all this. That is now answer'd.

Shal. The council shall know this.

Fal. 'Twere better for you, if it were not known in council; you'll be laugh'd at.

Eva. Pauca verba, Sir John, good worts.

Fal. Good worts? Good cabbage.——Slender, I broke your head: what matter have you againſt me?

Slen. Marry, Sir, I have matter in my head againſt you, and againſt your coney-catching raſcals, Bardolph, Nym, and Piſtol.

Bard. You Banbury cheeſe.

Slen. Ay, it is no matter.

Piſt. How now, Mephoſtophilus?

Slen. Ay, it is no matter.

Nym. Slice, I ſay, *pauca, pauca*; Slice, that's my humour.

Slen. Where's Simple, my man?—Can you tell, couſin?

Eva. Peace, I pray, you; now let us underſtand; there is three umpires in this matter, as I underſtand; that is Maſter Page, *fidelicet*, Maſter Page; and there is myſelf, *fidelicet*, myſelf; and the third party is, laſtly, and finally, mine hoſt of the Garter.

Page. We three to hear it, and end it between them.

Eva. Ferry goot: I will make a prief of it in my note-book, and we will afterwards ork upon the cauſe with as great diſcretions as we can.

Fal. Piſtol.

Piſt. He hears with ears.

Eva. The tevil and his tam; what phraſe is this, he hears with ears; Why this is affectations.

Fal. Piſtol, did you pick Maſter Slender's purſe?

Slen. Ay, by theſe gloves, did he, or I would I might never come in mine own chamber again elſe, of ſeven groats in mill-ſixpences, and two Edward ſhovel-boards, that coſt me two ſhilling and two pence a-piece, of Yead Miller; by theſe gloves.

Fal. Is this true, Piſtol?

Eva. No; it is falſe, if it is a pick-purſe.

Piſt. Ha! thou mountain foreigner; Sir John, and Maſter mine, I combat challenge of this latten bilbo; word of denial in thy *labras* here; word of denial; froth and ſcum, thou ly'ſt.

Slen. By theſe gloves, then, 'twas he.

Nym. Be advis'd, Sir, and paſs good-humours: I will ſay marry-trap with you, if you run the baſe humour on me; that is the very note of it.

Slen. By this hat, then, he in the red face had it; for tho' I cannot remember what I did when you made me drunk, yet I am not altogether an aſs.

Fal. What ſay you, Scarlet and John?

Bard. Why, Sir, for my part, I ſay the gentleman had drunk himſelf out of his five ſentences.

Eva. It is his five ſenſes: fye, what the ignorance is.

Bard. And being ſap, Sir, was, as they ſay, caſhier'd; and ſo concluſions paſt the *carieres*.

Slen. Ay, you ſpoke in Latin, then, too; but 'tis no matter; I'll ne'er be drunk whilſt I live again, but in honeſt, civil, godly company, for this trick; and not with drunken knaves.

Eva. So Got udge me, that is a virtuous mind.

Fal. You hear all theſe matters deny'd, gentleman, you hear it.

Enter Mrs. Anne Page, *with Wine.*

Page. Nay, daughter, carry the wine in; we'll drink within. [*Exit* Anne Page.

Slen. Oh, Heaven! this is Mrs. Anne Page.

Enter Mrs. Ford *and* Mrs. Page, *meeting.*

Page. How now, Mrs. Ford?

Fal. Mrs. Ford, by my troth, you are very well met—by your leave, Mrs. Ford.

Page. Wife, bid theſe gentlemen welcome—— Come, we have a hot veniſon paſty to dinner—— come, gentlemen, I hope we ſhall drink down all unkindneſs. [*Exit* Falſtaff, Page, *&c.*

Manent Shallow, Evans, *and* Slender.

Slen. I had rather than forty ſhillings, I had my book of ſongs and ſonnets here.——

Enter Simple.

How now, Simple, where have you been? I muſt wait on myſelf, muſt I? you have not the book of riddles about you, have you?

Sim. Book of riddles! why, did you not lend it to Alice Short-cake, upon Allhallowmas laſt, a fortnight afore Martlemas?

Shal. Come, coz; come, coz; we ſtay for you: a word with you, coz: marry this, coz; there is, as 'twere, a tender, a kind of tender, made afar off, by Sir Hugh here: do you underſtand me?

Slen. Ay, Sir, you ſhall find me reaſonable; if it be ſo, I will do that is reaſon.

Shal. Nay, but underſtand me.

Slen. So I do, Sir.

Eva. Give ear to his motions, Mr. Slender: I will deſcription the matter to you, if you be capacity of it.

Slen. Nay, I will do as my couſin Shallow ſays: I pray you, pardon me: he's a juſtice of peace in his country, ſimple tho' I ſtand here.

Eva. But that is not the queſtion: the queſtion is concerning your marriage.

Shal. Ay, there's the point, Sir.

Slen. Why, if it be ſo, I will marry her, upon any reaſonable demands.

Eva. But can you affection the 'oman? let us command to know that of your mouth, or of your lips: for divers philoſophers hold that the lips is a parcel of the mouth; therefore, preciſely, can you carry your good will to the maid?

Shal. Couſin Abraham Slender, can you love her?

Slen. I hope, Sir, I will do as it ſhall become one that would do reaſon.

Eva. Nay, Got's lord and his ladies! you muſt ſpeak poſſitable, if you can carry her your deſires towards her.

Shal. That you muſt: Will you, upon good dowry, marry her.

Slen. I will do a greater thing than that, upon your requeſt, couſin, in any reaſon.

Shal. Nay, conceive me, conceive me, ſweet coz; what I do, is to pleaſure you, coz: can you love the maid?

Slen. I will marry her, Sir, at your requeſt: but if there be no great love in the beginning, yet Heaven may decreaſe it upon better acquaintance, when we are married, and have more occaſion to know one another; I hope upon familiarity will grow more contempt. But if you ſay, marry her, I will marry her; that I am freely diſſolved, and diſſolutely.

Eva. It is a ferry diſcretion anſwer; ſave, the fault is in th' ort diſſolutely: the ort is, according to our meaning, reſolutely; his meaning is goot.

Shal. Ay, I think my couſin meant well.

Slen. Ay, or elſe I would I might be hang'd, la.

Enter Mrs. Anne Page.

Shal. Here comes fair Mrs. Anne. Would I were young, for your ſake, Mrs. Anne!

Anne. The dinner is on the table; my father deſires your worſhip's company.

Shal. I ſhall wait on him, fair Mrs. Anne.

Eva. Od's pleſſed will, I will not be abſence at the grace. [*Exeunt* Shallow *and* Evans.

Anne. Will't pleaſe your worſhip to come in, Sir?

Slen. No, I thank you, forſooth, heartily, I am very well.

Anne. The dinner attends you, Sir.

half; if thou feeſt her before me, commend me—

Quic. Will I? Ay, faith, that we will: and I will tell your worſhip more of the wart, the next time we have confidence; and of other wooers.

Tent. Well, farewel, I am in great haſte now. [*Exit.*

Quic. Farewel to your worſhip. Truly an honeſt gentleman; but Anne loves him not; I know Anne's mind as well as another does. Out upon't, what have I forgot! [*Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. *a Street before* Mr. Page's *Houſe.*

Enter Mrs. Page, *with a Letter.*

Mrs. Page. WHAT, have I 'ſcap'd love-letters in holiday time of my beauty, and am I now a ſubject for them? let me ſee——

ASK me no reaſons why I love you, for though love uſes reaſon for his phyſician, he admits him not for his counſellor: you are not young, no more am I; go to then, there's ſympathy. You are merry, ſo am I; ha, ha! then there's more ſympathy: you love ſack, and ſo do I; would you deſire better ſympathy? Let it ſuffice thee, Mrs. Page, at the leaſt if the love of a ſoldier can ſuffice, that I love thee. I will not ſay, pity me, 'tis not a ſoldier-like phraſe; but I ſay, love me.

By me, thine own true knight,
By day or night,
Or any kind of light,
With all his might,
For thee to fight. *John Falſtaff.*

What a Herod of Jewry is this! O wicked, wicked world! what unweigh'd behaviour hath this Flemiſh drunkard pickt out of my converſation, that he dares in this manner aſſay me? why, he hath not been thrice in my company! How ſhall I be reveng'd on him? for reveng'd I will be.

Enter Mrs. Ford

Mrs. Ford. Mrs. Page, truſt me, I was going to your houſe.

Mrs. Page. And truſt me, I was coming to you; you look very ill.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, I'll ne'er believe that. I have to ſhew to the contrary.

Mrs. Page. Faith, but you do, in my mind.

Mrs. Ford. Well, I do then; yet I ſay, I could ſhew you to the contrary. O, Mrs. Page, give me ſome counſel.

Mrs. Page. What's the matter, woman?

Mrs. Ford. O woman! if it were not for one trifling reſpect, I could come to ſuch honour.

Mrs. Page. Hang the trifle, woman, take the honour; what is it? diſpenſe with trifles; what is it?

Mrs. Ford. Why, I could be knighted.

Mrs. Page. What! you jeſt.

Mrs Ford. We burn day-light—here, read, read, perceive how I might be knighted: I ſhall think the worſe of fat men as long as I have an eye to make difference of men's liking! and yet he would not ſwear; prais'd women's modeſty; and gave ſuch orderly and well-behaved reproof to all uncomelineſs, that I would have ſworn his diſpoſition would have gone to the truth of his words; but they do no more adhere and keep place together, than the hundredth pſalm to the tune of "green ſleeves." What tempeſt, I trow, threw this whale aſhore, at Windſor? How ſhall I be reveng'd on him? Did you ever hear the like?

Mrs. Page. Letter for letter, but that the name of Page and Ford differs. To thy great comfort in this myſtery of ill opinions, here's the twin-brother of thy letter; but let thine inherit firſt, for I proteſt mine never ſhall. I warrant he hath a thouſand of theſe letters writ with blank ſpaces, for different names.

Mrs. Ford. Why, this is the very ſame, the very hand, the very words; what doth he think of us?

Mrs. Page. Nay, I know not; it makes me almoſt ready to wrangle with mine own honeſty: I'll entertain myſelf like one that I am not acquainted withal; for ſure unleſs he knew ſome ſtrain in me, that I know not myſelf, he would never have boarded me in this fury.

Mrs Ford. Boarding, call it you?

Mrs. Page. Let's be reveng'd on him; let's appoint him a meeting, and lead him on with a fine baited delay, till he hath pawn'd his horſes to mine hoſt of the Garter.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, I will conſent to act any villainy againſt him, that may not ſully the charineſs of our honeſty. O that my huſband ſaw this letter, it would give eternal food to his jealouſy!

Mrs. Page. Why, look where he comes, and my good man too: he's as far from jealouſy as I am from giving him cauſe; and that, I hope, is an unmeaſurable diſtance.

Mrs. Ford. You are the happier woman.

Mrs. Page. Let's conſult together againſt this greaſy knight. Come hither. [*They retire.*

Enter Ford *and* Page.

Ford. You heard what this knave told me, did you not?

Page. Yes; and you heard what the other told me?

Ford. Do you think there is truth in them?

Page. Hang 'em, ſlaves, I do not think the knight would offer it; but theſe that accuſe him in his intent towards our wives, are a yoke of his diſcarded men, very rogues now they be out of ſervice.

Ford. Were they his men?

Page. Marry were they.

Ford. I like it never the better for that.—Does he lie at the Garter?

Page. Ay, marry does he. If he would intend his voyage towards my wife, I would turn her looſe to him; and what he gets more of her than ſharp words, let it lie on my head.

Ford. I do not miſdoubt my wife, but I would be lothe to turn them together; a man may be too confident: I would have nothing lie on my head; I cannot be thus ſatisfy'd.

Page. Look where my ranting hoſt of the Garter comes: there is either liquor in his pate, or money in his purſe, when he looks ſo merrily.—How now, mine Hoſt?

Enter Hoſt *and* Shallow.

Hoſt. How now, bully-rock? thou'rt a gentleman, cavaliero-juſtice, I ſay.

Shal. I follow, mine Hoſt, I follow.—Good even, and twenty, good Maſter Page. Maſter Page, will you go with us? we have ſport in hand.

Hoſt. Tell him, cavaliero-juſtice; tell him, bully-rock.

Shal. Sir, there is a fray to be fought between Sir Hugh the Welſh prieſt, and Caius the French doctor.

Ford. Good-mine Hoſt o'th' Garter, a word with you.

Hoſt. What ſay'ſt thou, bully-rock?

Shal. Will you go with us to behold it? my merry

Host hath had the measuring of their weapons, and, I think, hath appointed them contrary places; for, believe me, I hear the parson is no jester. Hark, I will tell you what our sport shall be.

Host. Hast thou no suit against my knight, my guest, cavalier?

Ford. None, I protest; but I'll give you a pottle of burnt sack to give me recourse to him, and tell him my name is Brook; only for a jest.

Host. My hand, bully; thou shalt have egress and regress; said I well? and thy name shall be Brook. It is a merry knight.—Will you go on, heris?

Shal. Have with you, mine Host.

Page. I have heard the Frenchman hath good skill in his rapier.

Shal. Tut, Sir, I could have told you more; in these times you stand on distance, your passes, stoccados, and I know not what: 'tis the heart, Master Page; 'tis here, 'tis here. I have seen the time, with my long sword, I would have made you four tall fellows skip like rats.

Host. Here, boys, here, here; shall we wag?

Page. Have with you; I had rather hear them scold, than fight. [*Exeunt* Host, Shal. *and* Page.

Ford. Though Page be a secure fool, and stands so firmly on his wife's fealty, yet I cannot put off my opinion so easily. She was in his company, at Page's house, and what they made there I know not. Well, I will look farther into't; and I have a disguise to sound Falstaff. If I find her honest, I lose not my labour; if she be otherwise, 'tis labour well bestowed. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *the Garter-Inn.*

Enter Falstaff, Pistol, *and* Nym.

Fal. I will not lend thee a penny.

Pist. Why, then, the world's mine oyster, which I with sword will open. I will retort the sum in equipage.

Fal. Not a penny. I have been content, Sir, you should lay my countenance to pawn: I have grated upon my good friends for three reprieves for you, and your couch-fellow, Nym; or else you had look'd through the grate, like a geminy of baboons. I am damn'd in hell for swearing to gentlemen, my friends, you were good soldiers, and tall fellows. And when Mrs. Bridget lost the handle of her fan, I took't upon mine honour thou hadst it not.

Pist. Didst thou not share? Hadst thou not fifteenpence?

Fal. Reason, you rogue, reason: think'st thou I'll endanger my soul gratis? At a word; hang no more about me, I'm no gibbet for you: go, you'll not bear a letter for me, you rogue; you stand upon your honour? why, thou unconfinable baseness, it is as much as I can do to keep the term of my honour precise. I, I, I myself, sometimes, leaving the fear of Heaven on the left-hand, and hiding mine honour in my necessity, am fain to shuffle, to hedge, and to lurch; and yet, you rogue, will ensconse your rags, your cat-a-mountain looks, your red lattice phrases, and your bold-beating oaths, under the shelter of your honour! You will not do it, you!

Enter Robin.

Rob. Sir, here's a woman would speak with you.

Fal. Let her approach.

Enter Mrs. Quickly.

Quic. Give your worship good morrow.

Fal. Good morrow, good wife.

Quic. Not so, an't please your worship.

Fal. Good maid, then.

Quic. I'll be sworn,
As my mother was, the first hour I was born.

Fal. I do believe thee: what would'st thou with me?

Quic. Shall I vouchsafe your worship a word or two?

Fal. Two thousand, fair woman, and I'll vouchsafe thee the hearing.

Quic. There is one Mrs. Ford, Sir—I pray come a little nearer this ways: I myself dwell with Mr. Doctor Caius.

Fal. Well on—Mrs. Ford, you say.

Quic. Your worship says very true: I pray, your worship come a litt[illegible]arer this ways.

Fal. I warrant th[illegible] oboby hears: mine own people, mine own people.

Quic. Are they so? Heav'n bless them, and make them his servants! [*Exeunt* Pistol *and* Nym.

Fal. Well: Mrs. Ford—what of her?

Quic. Why, Sir, she's a good creature. Lord, Lord, your worship's a wanton—well, Heav'n forgive you, and all of us, I pray——

Fal. Mrs. Ford; come, Mrs. Ford——

Quic. Marry, this is the short and the long of it; you have brought her into such a canaries, as 'tis wonderful: the best courtier of them all, when the court lay at Windsor, could never have brought her to such a canary. Yet there has been knights and lords, and gentlemen, with their coaches; I warrant you, coach after coach, letter after letter, gift after gift, smelling so sweetly; all musk! and so rustling, I warrant you, in silk and gold; and in such alligant terms, and in such wine and sugar of the best, and the fairest, that would have won any woman's heart; and, I warrant you, they could never get an eye-wink of her. I had myself twenty angels given me, this morning; but I defy all angels, in any such sort as they say, but in the way of honesty; and, I warrant you, they could never get her so much as sip in a cup with the proudest of them all; and yet there has been earls, nay, which is more, pensioners: but, I warrant you, all is one with her.

Fal. But what says she to me? be brief, my good she Mercury?

Quic. Marry, she hath received your letter, for the which she thanks you a thousand times; and she gives you to notify, that her husband will be absence from his house, between ten and eleven.

Fal. Ten and eleven.

Quic. Ay, forsooth; and then you may come and see the picture, she says, that you wot of: Master Ford, her husband, will be from home. Alas! the sweet woman leads an ill life with him, he's a very jealousy man; she leads a very frampold life with him, good heart!

Fal. Ten and eleven; woman, commend me to her; I will not fail her.

Quic. Why you say well: But I have another messenger to your worship; Mrs. Page has her hearty commendations to you, too; and let me tell you in your ear, she's as fartuous a civil-modest wife, and one (I tell you) that will not miss your morning and evening prayer, as any is in Windsor, whoe'er be the other; and she bade me tell your worship that her husband is seldom from home, but she hopes there will come a time. I never knew a woman so doat upon a man; surely, I think, you have charms, la; yes, in truth.

Fal. Not I, I assure thee; setting the attraction of my good parts aside, I have no other charms.

Quic. Blessing on your heart for't!

Fal. But, I pray thee, tell me this; has Ford's wife and Page's wife acquainted each other how they love me?

Quic. That were a jest, indeed; they have not so

Slen. I am not an hungry, I thank you, forfooth: go, firrah, for all you are my man, go wait upon my cousin Shallow. [*Exit* Simple.] A justice of peace sometime may be beholden to his friend for a man. I keep but three men and a boy yet, till my mother be dead; but what tho', yet I live a poor gentleman born.

Anne. I may not go in without your worship; they will not sit till you come.

Slen. I'faith, I'll eat nothing; I thank you as much as though I did.

Anne. I pray you, Sir, walk in.

Slen. I had rather walk here, I thank you; I bruis'd my shin th' other day, with playing at sword and dagger, with a master of fence, three veneys for a dish of stewed prunes, and, by my troth, I cannot abide the smell of hot meat since. Why do your dogs bark so? be there bears i'th' town?

Anne. I think there are, Sir; I heard them talk'd of.

Slen. I love the sport well, but I shall as soon quarrel at it, as any man in England. You are afraid, if you see the bear loose, are you not?

Anne. Ay, indeed, Sir.

Slen. That's meat and drink to me, now; I have seen Sackerson loose, twenty times, and have taken him by the chain; but, I warrant you, the women have so cry'd and shriekt at it, that it past: but women, indeed, cannot abide 'em; they are very ill-favour'd rough things.

Enter Mr. Page.

Page. Come, gentle Mr. Slender, come; we stay for you.

Slen. I'll eat nothing, I thank you, Sir.

Page. By cock and pye, you shall not choose, Sir; come, come.

Slen. Nay, pray you lead the way.

Page. Come on, Sir. [*Exit* Page.

Slen. Mrs. Anne, yourself shall go first.

Anne. Not I, Sir; pray you keep on.

Slen. Truly, I will not go first, truly-la: I will not do you that wrong.

Anne. I pray you, Sir.

Slen. I'll rather be unmannerly than troublesome; you do yourself wrong, indeed-la. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE I.

Re-enter Evans *and* Simple.

Eva. Go your ways, and ask of Doctor Caius' house which is the way; and there dwells one Mrs. Quickly, which is in the manner of his nurse; or his dry nurse, or his cook, or his laundry, his washer, and his wringer.

Sim. Well, Sir.

Eva. Nay, it is petter yet; give her this letter; for it is a 'omen that altogether's acquaintance with Mrs. Anne Page, and the letter is to desire and require her to solicit your master's desires to Mrs. Anne Page: I pray you be gone; I will make an end of my dinner; there's pippins and cheese to come. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE III. *the Garter Inn.*

Enter Falstaff, *meeting* Nym, Pistol, *and* Robin.

Fal. Which of you know Ford, of this town?

Pist. I ken the wight, he is of substance good.

Fal. My honest lads, what think you I am about?

Pist. Two yards and more.

Fal. No quips now, Pistol: Indeed I am in the waist two yards about; but I am now about no waste, I am about thrift. Briefly, I do mean to make love to Ford's wife; I spy entertainment in her; she discourses, she carves, she gives the leer of invitation; I can construe the action of her familiar style, and the hardest voice of her behaviour, to be englisht right, is, I am Sir John Falstaff's.

Pist. He hath studyed her well, and translated her well, out of honesty into English.

Fal. Now the report goes, she has all the rule of her husband's purse: he hath a legion of angels.

Nym. The humour rises; it is good; humour me the angels.

Fal. I have writ me here a letter to her; and here another to Page's wife, who even now gave me willing eyes too, examin'd my parts; sometimes she kindly view'd my goodly legs, sometimes my portly belly.

Pist. Then did the sun on dunghill shine.

Nym. I thank thee for that humour.

Fal. O she did so course o'er my exteriors with such a greedy intention, that the appetite of her eye did seem to scorch me up like a burning-glass: here's another letter to her; she bears the purse too; she is a region in Guiana, all gold and bounty. I will be cheater to them both, and they shall be Exchequers to me: they shall be my East and West-Indies, and I will trade to them both. Go, bear thou this letter to Mrs. Page; and thou this to Mrs. Ford: we will thrive, lads, we will thrive.

Pist. Shall I Sir Pandarus of Troy become,
And by my side wear steel? Then, Lucifer, take all!

Nym. I will run no base humour: here take the humour letter; I will keep the 'haviour of reputation.

Fal. Here, boy, bear you these letters as they are directed. [*To* Robin.
Sail like my pinnance to these golden shores.
Rogues, hence, avaunt, vanish like hail-stones; go.
Trudge, plod away o'th'hoof, seek shelter, pack:
Falstaff will learn the humour of the age.
French thrift, you rogues, myself, and skirted Page.
[*Exit* Fal. *and Boy.*

Pist. Let vultures gripe thy guts; for gord and fullam holds: and high and low beguiles the rich and poor. Tester I'll have in pouch, when thou shalt lack, base Phrygian Turk.

Nym. I have operations in my head,
Which be humours of revenge.

Pist. Wilt thou revenge?

Nym. By Welkin and her star.

Pist. With wit or steel?

Nym. With both the humours, I:
I will discuss the humour of this love to Ford.

Pist. And I to Page shall eke unfold
How Falstaff, varlet vile,
His dove will prove, his gold will hold,
And his soft couch defile.

Nym. My humour shall not cool; I will incense Ford to deal with poison. I will possess him with yellowness, for the revolt of mien is dangerous: that is my true humour.

Pist. Thou art the Mars of male-contents: I second thee; troop on. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. Doctor Caius' *House.*

Enter Mrs. Quickly, Simple, *and* John Rugby.

Quick. What, John Rugby! I pray thee go to the casement, and see if you can see master, master Doctor Caius, coming; if he do, I'faith, and find any body in the house, here will be an old abusing of Heav'n's patience, and the king's English.

Rug. I'll go watch. [*Exit* Rugby.

Quic. Go, we'll have a posset for't soon at night, in faith, at the latter end of a sea-coal fire: an honest, willing, kind fellow, as ever servant shall come in house withal, and I warrant you no tell-tale, nor no breed-bate; his worst fault is, that he is given to canting; he is something peevish that way; but

nobody but has his fault; but let that pass. Peter Simple you say your name is.

Sim. Ay, for fault of a better.

Quic. And, Master Slender's your master?

Sim. Ay, forsooth.

Quic. Does he not wear a great round beard, like a glover's paring-knife?

Sim. No, forsooth; he hath but a little wee face, with a little yellow beard, a Cain-colour'd beard.

Quic. A softly-sprighted man, is he not?

Sim. Ay, forsooth; but he is as tall a man of his hands, as any is between this and his head; he hath fought with a warrener.

Quic. How say you? Oh, I should remember him; does he not hold up his head, as it were, and strut in his gait?

Sim. Yes, indeed, does he.

Quic. Well, Heav'n send Anne Page no worse fortune. Tell master Parson Evans I will do what I can for your master: Anne is a good girl, and I wish——

Enter Rugby.

Rug. Out, alas! here comes my master.

Quic. We shall all be undone; run in here, good young man; go into this closet. [*Shuts* Simple *in the closet.*] He will not stay long.—What, John Rugby! John! What, John, I say; go, John, go enquire for my master, I doubt he be not well, that he comes not home; and down, down, down a, &c.

[*Sings.*

Enter Doctor Caius.

Caius. Vat is you sing? I do not like des toys; pray you go and vetch me in my closet *un boitier verd*; a box, a green-a-box; do intend vat I speak; a green-a-box.

Quic. Ay, forsooth, I'll fetch it you.—I am glad he went not in himself; if he had found the man, he would have been horn-mad. [*Aside.*

Caius. *Fe, fe, fe, fe, ma foi. Il fait fort chaud, je m'en vais a la cour—la grande affaire.*

Quic. Is it this, Sir?

Caius. *Ouy, mettè le au mon* pocket; *depech*, quickly: Ver is dat knave Rugby?

Quic. What, John Rugby! John!

Rug. Here, Sir.

Caius. You are John Rugby, and you are Jack Rugby; come, take-a your rapier, and come after my heel to the court.

Rug. 'Tis ready, Sir, here in the porch.

Caius. By my trot I tarry too long; od's me, *qu'ay je oublie:* dere is some simples in my closet, dat I vil not for the varld I shall leave behind.

Quic. Ay me, he'll find the young man there, and be mad.

Caius. O *diable, diable!* vat is in my closet? *Villaine, larron*, Rugby! my rapier.

[*Pulls* Simple *out of the closet.*

Quic. Good master, be content.

Caius. Wherefore should I be content-a?

Quic. The young man is an honest man.

Caius. What shall de honest man do in my closet? dere is no honest man dat shall come in my closet.

Quic. I beseech you be not so phlegmatic; hear the truth of it. He came of an errand to me from parson Hugh.

Caius. Vell.

Sim. Ay forsooth, to desire her to——

Quic. Peace, I pray you.

Caius. Peace a your tongue, speak a your tale.

Sim. To desire this honest gentlewoman, your maid, to speak a good word to Mrs. Anne Page, for my master, in the way of marriage.

Quic. This is all, indeed—la; but I'll ne'er put my finger in the fire, and need not.

Caius. Sir Hugh send a-you? Rugby, baillez me some paper; tarry you a little awhile.

Quic. I am glad he is so quiet; if he had been thoroughly moved, you should have heard him so loud, and so melancholy: but notwithstanding, man, I'll do for your master what good I can; and the very yea and the no is, the French doctor, my master, I may call him my master, look you, for I keep his house, and I wash, wring, brew, bake, scour, dress meat and drink, make the beds, and do all, myself.

Sim. 'Tis a great charge to come under one body's hand.

Quic. Are you advis'd o' that? you shall find it a great charge; and to be up early, and down late. But notwithstanding, to tell you in your ear; I would have no words of it, my master himself is in love with Mrs. Anne Page; but notwithstanding that, I know Anne's mind, that's neither here nor there.

Caius. You jack-a-nape; give a this letter to Sir Hugh; by gar it is a shallenge: I will cut his troat in de parke, and I will teach a scurvy jack-a-nape priest tu meddle or make—You may be gone, it is not good you tarry here. [*Exit* Simple.

Quic. Alas! he speaks but for his friend.

Caius. It is no matter a ver dat: do you not tell-a me dat I shall have Anne Page for myself? By gar I will kill de jack preest; and I have appointed mine host of *de jarteer* to measure our weapon; by gar, I will myself have Anne Page.

Quic. Sir, the maid loves you, and all shall be well: we must give folks leave to prate; what the good-jer.

Caius. Rugby, come to the court with me; by gar, if I have not Anne Page, I shall turn your head out of my dour; follow my heels, Rugby.

[*Exit* Caius *and* Rugby.

Quic. You shall have a fool's head of your own. No, I know Anne's mind for that; never a woman in Windsor knows more of Anne's mind than I do, nor can do more than I do with her, I thank Heav'n.

Fent. [*Within.*] Who's within there, hoa?

Quic. Who's there, I trow? Come near the house, I pray you.

Enter Mr. Fenton.

Fent. How now, good woman, how dost thou?

Quic. The better that it pleases your good worship to ask.

Fent. What news? How does pretty Mis. Anne?

Quic. In truth, Sir, and she is pretty, and honest, and gentle, and one that is your friend, I can tell you that, by the way, I praise Heav'n for it.

Fent. Shall I do any good, think'st thou? Shall I not lose my suit?

Quic. Troth, Sir, all is in his hands above: but notwithstanding, Mr. Fenton, I'll be sworn on a book she loves you. Have not your worship a wart above your eye?

Fent. Yes, marry have I; and what of that?

Quic. Well, thereby hangs a tale; good faith, it is such another Nan; but, I detest, an honest maid, as ever broke bread; we had an hour's talk of that wart: I shall never laugh but in that maid's company! but, indeed, she is given too much to allicholly and musing; but for you—Well—go to——

Fent. Well, I shall see her, to-day; hold, there's money for thee: let me have thy voice in my be-

little grace, I hope; that were a trick, indeed! But Mrs. Page would desire you to send her your little page, of all loves: Her husband has a marvellous infection to the little page; and truly Master Page is a very honest man. Never a wife in Windsor leads a better life than she does; do what she will, say what she will, take all, pay all, go to bed when she list, rise when she list, all is as she will; and truly she deserves it, for if there be a kind woman in Windsor, truly she is one. You must send her your page—no remedy.

Fal. Why, I will.

Quic. Nay, but do so then; and, look you, he may come and go between you both; and in any case, have a nay-word, that you may know one another's mind, and the boy never need to understand any thing; for 'tis not good that children should know any wickedness: old folks, you know, have discretion, as they say, and know the world.

Fal. Fare thee well; commend me to them both; there's my purse, I am thy debtor.—Boy, go along with this woman.—This news distracts me.

[*Exit* Quickly *and* Robin.

—Say'st thou so, old Jack? go thy ways; I'll make more of thy old body than I have done; will they yet look after thee? wilt thou, after the expence of so much time and money, be now a gainer? Good body, I thank thee; let them say, 'tis grossly done, so it be fairly done, no matter.

Enter Bardolph.

Bard. Sir John, there's one Master Brook below would fain speak with you, and be acquainted with you; and hath sent your worship a morning's draught of sack.

Fal. Brook is his name?

Bard. Ay, Sir.

Fal. Call him in—[*Exit* Bard.] Such Brooks are welcome to me, that o'erflow with such liquor. Ah! ha! Mrs. Ford, and Mrs. Page, have I encompass'd you? Go to, *via.*

Enter Ford *disguis'd, and* Bardolph.

Ford. Bless you, Sir.

Fal. And you, Sir; would you speak with me?

Ford. I make bold to press with so little preparation upon you.

Fal. You're welcome; what's your will?—Give us leave, Bardolph. [*Exit* Bardolph.

Ford. Sir, I am a gentleman that have spent much; my name is Brook.

Fal. Good Master Brook, I desire more acquaintance of you.

Ford. Good Sir John, I sue for yours; not to charge you; for I must let you understand, I think myself in better plight for a lender, than you are, the which hath something emboldened me to this unseason'd intrusion; for they say, if money go before, all ways do lie open.

Fal. Money is a good soldier, Sir, and will on.

Ford. Troth, and I have a bag of money here troubles me; if you will help me to bear it, Sir John, take all, or half, for easing me of the carriage.

Fal. Sir, I know not how I may deserve to be your porter.

Ford. I will tell you, Sir, if you will give me the hearing.

Fal. Speak, good Mr. Brook; I shall be glad to be your servant.

Ford. Sir, I hear you are a scholar——I will be brief with you——and you have been a man long known to me, though I had never so good means as desire to make myself acquainted with you: I shall discover a thing to you, wherein I must very much lay open mine own imperfections; but, good Sir John, as you have one eye upon my follies, as you hear them unfolded, turn another into the register of your own, that I may pass with a reproof the easier, sith you yourself know how easy it is to be such an offender.

Fal. Very well: Sir, proceed.

Ford. There is a gentlewoman in this town, her husband's name is Ford.

Fal. Well, Sir.

Ford. I have long lov'd her, and, I protest to you, bestowed much upon her, follow'd her with a doating observance, ingross'd opportunities to meet her, fee'd every slight occasion that could but niggardly give me sight of her; not only bought many presents to give her, but have given largely to many, to know what she would have given: briefly, I have pursued her, as love hath pursued me, which hath been on the wing of all occasions. But whatsoever I have merited, either in my mind, or in my means, meed I am sure I have received none, unless experience be a jewel; that I have purchased at an infinite rate, and that hath taught me to say this;

Love like a shadow flies, when substance love pursues;
Pursuing that that flies, and flying what pursues.

Fal. Have you receiv'd no promise of satisfaction at her hands?

Ford. Never.

Fal. Have you importun'd her to such a purpose?

Ford. Never.

Fal. Of what quality was your love, then?

Ford. Like a fair house built on another man's ground; so that I have lost my edifice, by mistaking the place where I erected it.

Fal. To what purpose have you unfolded this to me?

Ford. When I have told you that, I have told you all: some say, that though she appear honest to me, yet in other places she enlargeth her mirth so far, that there is shrewd construction made of her. Now, Sir John, here is the heart of my purpose: you are a gentleman of excellent breeding, admirable discourse, of great admittance, authentic in your place and person, generally allowed for your many warlike, court-like, and learned preparations.

Fal. O, Sir!

Ford. Believe it, for you know it; there is money; spend it, spend it; spend more, spend all I have, only give me so much of your time in exchange of it, as to lay an amiable siege to the honesty of this Ford's wife; use your art of wooing, win her to consent to you; if any man may, you may, as soon as any.

Fal. Would it apply well to the vehemence of your affection, that I should win what you would enjoy? Methinks you prescribe to yourself very preposterously.

Ford. O, understand my drift! she dwells so securely on the excellency of her honour, that the folly of my soul dares not present itself; she is too bright to be look'd against. Now could I come to her with any detection in my hand, my desires had instance and argument to commend themselves; I could drive her then from the ward of her purity, her reputation, her marriage-vow, and a thousand other her defences, which now are too strongly embattled against me. What say you to't, Sir John?

Fal. Master Brook, I will first make bold with your money; next, give me your hand; and last, as I am a gentleman, you shall, if you will, enjoy Ford's wife.

Ford. O, good Sir!

Fal. I say, you shall.

Ford. Want no money, Sir John, you shall want none.

Fal. Want no Mrs. Ford, Master Brook, you shall want none; I shall be with her, I may tell you, by her own appointment. Even as you came in to me, her assistant, or go-between, parted from me; I say, I shall be with her, between ten and eleven; for at that time, the jealous, rascally knave, her husband, will be forth; come you to me at night, you shall know how I speed.

Ford. I am blest in your acquaintance: do you know Ford, Sir?

Fal. Hang him, poor cuckoldly knave, I know him not: yet I wrong him to call him poor; they say the jealous, wittoly knave, hath masses of money, for the which his wife seems to me well favour'd. I will use her as the key of the cuckoldly rogue's coffer, and there's my harvest-home.

Ford. I would you knew Ford, Sir, that you might avoid him if you saw him.

Fal. Hang him, mechanical salt-butter rogue! I will stare him out of his wits; I will awe him with my cudgel; it shall hang like a meteor o'er the cuckold's horns. Master Brook, thou shalt know I will predominate over the peasant, and thou shalt lie with his wife. Come to me soon at night: Ford's a knave, and I'll aggravate his stile; thou, Master Brook, shalt know him for a knave and cuckold. Come to me soon at night. [*Exit.*

Ford. What a damn'd Epicurean rascal is this! My heart is ready to crack with impatience. Who says this is improvident jealousy? My wife hath sent to him, the hour is fix'd, the match is made. Would any man have thought this? See the hell of having a false woman! My bed shall be abused, my coffers ransacked, my reputation gnawn at; and I shall not only receive this villainous wrong, but stand under the adoption of abominable terms, and by him that does me the wrong. Terms, names; Amaimon sounds well, Lucifer well, Barbason well, yet they are devils additions, the names of fiends; but cuckold, wittol cuckold! the devil himself hath not such a name. Page is an ass, a secure ass, he will trust his wife; he will not be jealous; I will rather trust a Fleming with my butter; parson Hugh, the Welchman, with my cheese; an Irishman with my Aquavita bottle; or a thief to walk my ambling gelding; than my wife with herself: then she plots, then she ruminates, then she devises; and what they think in their hearts they may effect, they will break their hearts but they will effect. Heaven be praised for my jealousy! Eleven o'clock the hour; I will prevent this, detect my wife, be revenged on Falstaff, and laugh at Page: I will about it; better three hours too soon, than a minute too late. Fy, fy, fy; cuckold, cuckold, cuckold! O, the devil. [*Exit.*

SCENE III. Windsor Park.

Enter Caius *and* Rugby.

Caius. Jack Rugby.

Rug. Sir.

Caius. Vat is de clock, Jack?

Rug. 'Tis past the hour, Sir, that Sir Hugh promised to meet.

Caius. By gar, he has save his soul, dat he is no come; he has pray his pible well, dat he is no come; by gar, Jack Rugby, he is dead already, if he be come.

Rug. He is wise, Sir; he knew your worship would kill him if he came.

Caius. By gar, de herring is not so dead as me vill make him: take your rapier, Jack, I vill tell you how I vill kill him.

Rug. Alas, Sir, I cannot fence.

Caius. Villany, take your rapier.

Rug. Forbear; here's company.

Enter Host, Shallow, Slender, *and* Page.

Host. 'Bless thee, bully-doctor.

Shal. Save you, Mr. Doctor Caius.

Page Now, good Mr. Doctor.

Sien. Give you good morrow, Sir.

Caius. Vat be all you, one, two, tree, four, come for?

Host. To see thee fight, to see thee foigne, to see thee traverse, to see thee here, to see thee there, to see thee pass by punctо, thy stock, thy reverse, thy distance, thy montant. Is he dead, my Ethiopian? Is he dead, my Francisco? Ha, bully! What says my Æsculapius? My Galen? my heart of elder? Ha! is he dead, bully-stale? Is he dead?

Caius. By gar, he is de coward Jack priest of de vorld; he is not show his face.

Host. Thou art a Castalian king—Urinal: Hector of Greece, my boy.

Caius. I pray you, bear witness, that me have stay six or seven, two, tree hours, for him, and he is no come.

Shal. He is a wiser man, Mr. Doctor; he is a curer of souls, and you are a curer of bodies: if you should fight, you go against the hair of your professions—Is it not true, Master Page?

Page. Master Shallow, you have yourself been a great fighter, tho' now a man of peace.

Shal. Body-kins, Mr. Page, tho' I now be old, and of peace, if I see a sword out, my finger itches to make one: tho' we are justices, and doctors, and churchmen, Mr. Page, we have some salt of our youth in us; we are the sons of women, Mr. Page.

Page. 'Tis true, Mr. Shallow.

Shal. It will be found so Mr. Page.—Mr Doctor Caius, I am come to fetch you home; I am sworn of the peace; you have shewed yourself a wise physician, and Sir Hugh hath shewn himself a wise patient churchman, you must go with me, Mr Doctor.

Host. Pardon, guest-justice; a word, Monsieur Mock-water.

Caius. Mock-vater? Vat is dat?

Host. Mock-water, in our English tongue, is valour, bully.

Caius. By gar, then I have as much mock vater as de scurvy jack-dog priest; by gar, me vill cut his ears.

Host. He will clapper-claw thee tightly, bully.

Caius. Clapper-de-claw? Vat is dat?

Host. That is, he will make thee amends.

Caius. By gar me do look he shall clapper-de-claw me; for by gar, me vill have it.

Host. And I will provoke him to't, or let him wag.

Caius. Me tank you for dat.

Host. And moreover, bully—but first, Mr. Guest, and Mr. Page, and eke Cavaleiro Slender, go you through the town to Frogmore.

Page. Sir Hugh is there, is he?

Host. He is there; see what humour he is in; and I will bring the doctor about the fields: will it do well?

Shal. We will do it.

All. Adieu, good Mr. Doctor.

[*Exit* Page, Shal. *and* Slen.

Caius. By gar, me vill kill de priest; for he speak for a jack-an-ape to Anne Page.

Host. Sheath thy impatience; throw cold water on thy choler; go about the fields with me through

Frogmore; I will bring thee where Mrs. Anne Page is, at a farm-house a feasting, and thou shalt woo her: said I well?

Caius. By gar, me tank you vor dat! by gar, I love you; and I vill procure 'a you de good guest; de earl, de knight, de lords, de gentlemen, my patients.

Host. For the which I will be thy adversary toward Anne Page: said I well?

Caius. By gar, 'tis good; vell said.

Host. Let us wag, then.

Caius. Come at my heels, Jack Rugby.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I. Frogmore, *near* Windsor.

Enter Evans *and* Simple.

Eva. I Pray you now, good Master Slender's serving-man, and friend Simple by your name, which way have you look'd for Master Caius, that calls himself Doctor of Physic?

Simp. Marry, Sir, the Pitty-wary, the Park-ward, every way, Old Windsor way, and every way, but the town way.

Eva. I most fehemently desire you, you will also look that way.

Simp. I will, Sir.

Eva. 'Pless my soul, how full of cholars I am, and trempling of mind! I shall be glad if he have deceived me; how melancholies I am! I will knog his urinals about his knave's costard, when I have good opportunities for the ork; 'pless my soul!

By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals;
There will we make our beds with roses,
And a thousand vagrant poses.

By shallow ——Mercy on me, I have a great dispositions to cry!

Melodious birds sing madrigals
—When as I sat in pabilon;
And a thousand vagrant poses.

By shallow, &c.

Simp. Yonder he is coming, this way, Sir Hugh.

Eva. He's welcome.—By shallow rivers to whose falls——Heaven prosper the right! what weapons is he?

Simp. No weapons, Sir; there comes my master, Mr. Shallow, and another gentleman from Frogmore, over the stile, this way.

Eva. Pray, you, give me my gown, or else keep it in your arms.

Enter Page, Shallow, *and* Slender.

Shal. How now, Master Parson? Good morrow, good Sir Hugh. Keep a gamester from the dice, and a good student from his book, and it is wonderful.

Slen. Ah, sweet Anne Page!

Page. Save you, good Sir Hugh.

Eva. 'Pless you from his mercy sake, all of you.

Shal. What! the sword and the word? Do you study them both, Mr. Parson?

Page. And youthful still, in your doublet and hose, this raw rheumatic day?

Eva. There is reasons and causes for it.

Page. We are come to do you a good office, Mr. Parson.

Eva. Fery well: what is it?

Page. Yonder is a most reverend gentleman, who, belike, having received wrong by some person, is at most odds with his own gravity and patience, that ever you saw.

Shal. I have lived fourscore years and upwards; I never heard a man of his place, gravity, and learning, so wide of his own respect.

Eva. What is he?

Page. I think you know him—Mr. Doctor Caius, the renowned French physician.

Eva. Got's will, and his passion of my heart! I had as lief you should tell me of a mess of porridge.

Page. Why?

Eva. He has no more knowledge in Hibocrates and Galen; and he is a knave besides, a cowardly knave, as you would desire to be acquainted withal.

Page. I warrant you, he's the man should fight with him.

Slen. O, sweet Anne Page!

Enter Host, Caius, *and* Rugby.

Shal. It appears so by his weapons: keep them asunder—here comes Doctor Caius.

Page. Nay, good Mr. Parson, keep in your weapon.

Shal. So do you, good Mr. Doctor.

Host. Disarm them, and let them question: let them keep their limbs whole, and hack our English.

Caius. I pray you, let me speak a word with the ear: wherefore will you not meet a me?

Eva. Pray, you, use your patience in good time.

Caius. By gar, you are de coward, de Jack dog, John ape.

Eva. Pray, you, let us not be laughing-stocks to other men's humours; I desire you in friendship, and will one day or other make you amends; I will knog your urinal about your knave's cog s-comb, for missing your meetings and appointments.

Caius. Diable! Jack Rugby, mine Host de Jarter, have not I stay for him, to kill him? have I not, at the place I did appoint?

Eva. As I am a christian soul, now look you, this is the place appointed; I'll be judgment by mine Host of the Garter.

Host. Peace, I say; Gallia and Gaul, French and Welsh, soul-curer and body-curer.

Caius. Ay, dat is very good, excellent.

Host. Peace, I say; hear mine Host of the Garter. Am I politic? am I subtle? am I a Machiavel? Shall I lose my doctor? no; he gives me the potions and the motions. Shall I lose my parson? my priest? my Sir Hugh? no; he gives me the proverbs and the noverbs. Give me thy hand, terrestrial; so, give us thy hand, celestial; so, boys of art, I have deceived you both, I have directed you to wrong places; your hearts are mighty, your skins are whole, and let burnt sack be the issue.—Come, lay their swords to pawn. Follow me, lad of peace, follow, follow, follow.

Shal. Trust me, a mad Host!—follow, gentlemen, follow.

Slen. O, sweet Anne Page!

[*Exit* Shallow, Page, *and* Host.

Caius. Ha! do I perceive dat? Have you make a de sot of us, ha, ha?

Eva. This is well, he has made us his vlouting-stog: I desire you that we may be friends, and let us knog our prains together, to be reverge on this same scall'd scurvy-cogging companion, the Host of the Garter.

Caius. By gar, with all my heart; he promise to bring me wher is Anne Page; by gar, he deceive me too.

Eva. Well, I will smite his noddies; pray, you, follow.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *a Street in* Windsor.

Enter Mrs. Page *and* Robin.

Mrs. Page. Nay, keep your way, little gallant,

you were wont to be a follower, but now you are a leader: whether had you rather lead mine eyes, or eye your master's heels?

Rob. I had rather, forsooth, go before you like a man, than follow him like a dwarf.

Mrs. Page. O you are a flattering boy; now, I see, you'll be a courtier.

Enter Ford.

Ford. Well met, Mrs. Page; whither go you?

Mrs. Page. Truly, Sir, to see your wife; is she at home?

Ford. Ay, and as idle as she may hang together, for want of company; I think, if your husbands were dead, you two would marry.

Mrs. Page. Be sure of that, two other husbands.

Ford. Where had you this pretty weather-cock?

Mrs. Page. I cannot tell what the dickens his name is, my husband had him of—What do you call your knight's name, sirrah?

Rob. Sir John Falstaff.

Ford. Sir John Falstaff?

Mrs. Page. He, he; I can never hit his name; there is such a league between my good man and he—is your good wife at home, indeed?

Ford. Indeed, she is.

Mrs. Page. By your leave, Sir; I am sick till I see her. [*Exeunt* Mrs. Page *and* Robin.

Ford. Has Page any brains; hath he any eyes? hath he any thinking? sure they sleep; he hath no use of them. Why, this boy will carry a letter twenty miles, as easy as a cannon will shoot point-blank twelve score; he pieces out his wife's inclination, he gives her folly motion and advantage; and now she's going to my wife, and Falstaff's boy with her! A man may hear this shower sing in the wind; and Falstaff's boy with her! good plots, they are laid. Well, I will take him, then torture my wife, pluck the borrowed veil of modesty from the so seeming Mrs. Page, divulge Page himself, for a secure and wilful Acteon—[*Clock strikes ten.*] The clock gives me my cue, and my assurance bids me search; there shall I find Falstaff: I shall be rather praised for this, than mocked; for it is as positive as the earth is firm, that Falstaff is there.

Enter Page, Shallow, Slender, Host, Evans, *and* Caius.

Shal. Page, &c. Well met, Mr. Ford.

Ford. Trust me, a good knot: I have good cheer at home, and I pray you all go with me.

Shal. I must excuse myself, Mr. Ford.

Slen. And so must I, Sir:
We have appointed to dine with Mrs. Anne;
And I would not break with her for more money
Than I'll speak of.

Shal. We have linger'd about a match between Anne Page, and my cousin Slender; and this day we shall have our answer.

Slen. I hope I shall have your good-will, father Page.

Page. You have, Mr. Slender, I stand wholly for you; but my wife, master doctor, is for you, altogether.

Caius. Ay, by gar, and de maid is love a-me: my nursh-a-Quickly tell me so much.

Host. What say you to young Mr. Fenton? he capers, he dances, he has eyes of youth, he writes verses, he speaks holidays, he smells April and May; he will carry't, he will carry't, he will carry't.

Page. Not by my consent, I promise you: The wealth I have, waits on my consent, and my consent goes not that way.

Ford. I beseech you heartily, some of you go home with me to dinner; besides your cheer, you shall have sport; and I will shew you a monster.—Mr. Doctor, you shall go—so shall you, Mr. Page—and you, Sir Hugh.

Shal. Well, fare you well;
We shall have the freer wooing at Mr. Page's.

Caius. Go home, John Rugby; I come anon.

Host. Farewel, my heart; I will to my honest knight Falstaff, and drink canary with him.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. Ford's *House.*

Enter Mrs. Ford, Mrs. Page, *and Servants with a Basket.*

Mrs. Ford. What John!—what Robert!

Mrs. Page. Quickly, quickly: Is the buck-basket——

Mrs. Ford. I warrant.—What, Robin, I say.

Mrs. Page. Come, come, come.

Mrs. Ford. Here, set it down.

Mrs. Page. Give your men the charge, we must be brief.

Mrs. Ford. Marry, as I told you before, John and Robert, be ready here hard by in the brew-house; and when I suddenly call you, come forth, and, without any pause or staggering, take this basket on your shoulders; that done, trudge with it in all haste, and carry it among the whitsters in Datchet Mead, and there empty it in the muddy ditch, close by the Thames side.

Mrs. Page. You will do it?

Mrs. Ford. I ha' told them over and over; they lack no direction. Be gone, and come when you are called.

Mrs. Page. Here comes little Robin.

Enter Robin.

Mrs. Ford. How now, my eyas-musket, what news with you?

Rob. My master, Sir John, is come in at your back-door, Mrs. Ford, and requests your company.

Mrs. Page. You little jack-a-lent, have you been true to us?

Rob. Ay, I'll be sworn; my master knows not of your being here, and hath threatened to put me into everlasting liberty, if I tell you of it; for he swears he'll turn me away.

Mrs. Page. Thou art a good boy; I'll go hide me.

Mrs. Ford. Do so—go tell thy master I am alone—Mrs. Page, remember you your cue.

[*Exit* Robin.

Mrs. Page. I warrant thee; if I do not act it, hiss me. [*Exit* Mrs. Page.

Mrs. Ford. Go to, then; we'll use this unwholsome humidity, this gross wat'ry pumpion—we'll teach him to know turtles from jays.

Enter Falstaff.

Fal. Have I caught thee, my heavenly jewel? This is the period of thy ambition: O this blessed hour!

Mrs. Ford. O, sweet Sir John!

Fal. Mrs. Ford, I cannot cog; I cannot flatter, Mrs. Ford. Now shall I sin in my wish. I would thy husband were dead. I'll speak it before the best lord in the land, I would make thee my lady.

Mrs. Ford. I your lady, Sir John? Alas, I would be a pitiful lady.

Fal. Let the court of France shew me such another: I see how thine eye would emulate the diamond; thou hast the right arched bent of the brow.

Mrs. Ford. A plain kerchiffe, Sir John:
My brows become nothing else; nor that well, neither.

Fal. Thou art a tyrant to say so, thou would'st make an absolute courtier. If fortune's thy foe, nature is thy friend: come, thou canst not hide it.

Mrs. Ford. Believe me, there's no such thing in me.

Fal. What made me love thee? let that persuade thee. There's something extraordinary in thee. Come, I cannot cog, and say thou art this and that, like a many of these lisping hawthorn buds, that come like women in men's apparel, and smell like Bucklersbury in simpling-time: I cannot; but I love thee, none but thee; and thou deservest it.

Mrs. Ford. Do not betray me, Sir; I fear you love Mrs. Page.

Fal. Thou might'st as well say I love to walk by the Counter-gate, which is as hateful to me as the reek of a lime-kiln.

Mrs. Ford. Well, 'tis certain I love you, and you shall one day find it.

Fal. Keep in that mind; I'll deserve it.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, I must tell you, so you do; or else I could not be in that mind.

Rob. [*Within.*] Mrs. Ford, Mrs. Ford, here's Mrs. Page at the door, and must needs speak with you presently,

Fal. She shall not see me; I will ensconce me behind the arras.

Mrs. Ford. Pray you do so; she's a very tattling woman.

Enter Mrs. Page.

—What's the matter? how now?

Mrs. Page. O, Mrs. Ford, what have you done now? You're sham'd, you're overthrown, you're undone, for ever.

Mrs. Ford. What's the matter, good Mrs. Page?

Mrs. Page. O well-a-day, Mrs. Ford, having an honest man to your husband, to give him such cause of suspicion!

Mrs. Ford. What cause of suspicion?

Mrs. Page. What cause of suspicion! Out upon you; how am I mistook in you!

Mrs. Ford. What, alas! what's the matter?

Mrs. Page. Your husband's coming hither, woman, with all the officers in Windsor, to search for a gentleman that he says is here now in the house, by your consent, to take an ill advantage of his absence. You are undone.

Mrs. Ford. 'Tis not so, I hope.

Mrs. Page. Pray, Heaven it be not so, that you have such a man here; but 'tis most certain your husband's coming with half Windsor at his heels, to search for such a one. I come before to tell you: if you know yourself clear, why I am glad of it; but if you have a friend here, convey, convey him out. Be not amaz'd, call all your senses to you, defend your reputation, or bid farewel to your good life for ever.

Mrs. Ford. What shall I do? there is a gentleman, my dear friend; and I fear not mine own shame so much as his peril. I had rather than a thousand pound he were out of the house.

Mrs. Page. For shame! never stand, you had rather, and you had rather; your husband's here at hand, bethink you of some conveyance; in the house you cannot hide him. Oh, how you have deceived me! look, here is a basket; if he be of any reasonable stature, he may creep in here, and throw foul linen upon him, as if it were going to bucking: or it is whiting-time, send him by your two men to Datchet Mead.

Mrs. Ford. He is too big to go in there: what shall I do?

Re-enter Falstaff.

Fal. Let me see't, let me see't, O let me see't, I'll in, I'll in; follow your friend's counsel; I'll in.

Mrs. Page. What, Sir John Falstaff? are these your letters, knight?

Fal. I love thee, help me away! let me creep in here: I'll never———

[*He goes into the basket, they cover him with foul linen.*

Mrs. Page. Help to cover him—call your men, Mrs. Ford.—You dissembling knight!

Mrs. Ford. What, John, Robert, John, go take up these clothes here quickly. Where's the cowl-staff? Carry them to the laundress at Datchet Mead; quickly come.

Enter Ford, Page, Caius, *and* Evans.

Ford. Pray you come near; if I suspect, without cause, why, then, make sport at me, then let me be your jest, I deserve it.—How now? whither bear you this?

Ser. To the laundress, forsooth.

Mrs. Ford. Why, what have you to do whither they bear it? You were best meddle with buck-washing!

Ford. Buck? I would I could wash myself of the buck: buck, buck, buck, ay, buck: I warrant you, buck, and of the season too it shall appear.

[*Exeunt* Servants *with the basket.*

—Gentlemen, I have dreamt to night, I'll tell you my dream: here, here, here by my eyes; ascend my chambers, search, seek, find out. I'll warrant we'll unkennel the fox. Let me stop this way, first; so, now uncape.

Page. Good Master Ford, be contented: You wrong yourself too much.

Ford. True, Master Page.—Up, gentlemen, you shall see sport anon; follow me, gentlemen.

Eva. This is ferry fantastical humours and jealousies.

Caius. By gar, 'tis no the fashion of France; it is not jealous in France———

Page. Nay, follow him, gentlemen; see the issue of his search. [*Exeunt.*

Manent Mrs. Page *and* Mrs. Ford.

Mrs. Page. Is there not a double excellency in this?

Mrs. Ford. I know not which pleases me better, that my husband is deceived, or Sir John.

Mrs. Page. What a taking was he in, when your husband ask'd who was in the basket!

Mrs. Ford. I am half afraid he will have need of washing; so throwing him into the water will do him a benefit.

Mrs. Page. Hang him, dishonest rascal; I would all of the same strain were in the same distress.

Mrs. Ford. I think my husband hath some special suspicion of Falstaff's being here! I never saw him so gross in his jealousy, till now.

Mrs. Page. I will lay a plot to try that, and we will yet have more tricks with Falstaff.

Mrs. Ford. Shall we send that foolish carrion, Mrs. Quickly, to him, and excuse his throwing into the water, and give him another hope, to betray him into another punishment?

Mrs. Page. We'll do it; let him be sent for, to-morrow, by eight o'clock, to have amends.

Re-enter Ford, Page, *&c.*

Ford. I cannot find him: may be, the knave bragg'd of that he could not compass.

Mrs. Page. Heard you that?

Mrs. Ford. I, I, peace—You use me well, Master Ford, do you?

Ford. Ay, ay. I do so.

Mrs. Page. Heav'n make you better than your thoughts.

Ford. Amen,

Mrs. Page. You do yourself mighty wrong, Mr. Ford.

Ford. Ay, ay; I must bear it.

Enter Evans.

Eva. If there be any pody in the house, and in the chambers, and in the coffers, and in the presses, Heav'n forgive my sins!

Caius. By gar, nor I too: there is no bodies.

Page. Fye, fye, Mr. Ford, are you not ashamed? What spirit, what devil, suggests this imagination? I would not have your distemper in this kind, for the wealth of Windsor-Castle.

Ford. 'Tis my fault, Mr. Page, I suffer for it.

Eva. You suffer for pad conscience; your wife is as honest a 'omans, as I will desires among five thousand, and five hundred too.

Caius. By gar, I see 'tis an honest woman.

Ford. Well, I promised you a dinner; come, come, walk in the park. I pray you, pardon me; I will hereafter make known to you why I have done this. ——Come, wife—come, Mrs. Page; I pray you, pardon me: pray, heartily pardon me.

Page. Let's go in, gentlemen; but, trust me, we'll mock him.—I do invite you to-morrow morning to my house to breakfast; after, we'll a birding together; I have a fine hawk for the bush.—Shall it be so?

Ford. Any thing.

Pray you go, Mr. Page.

Eva. I pray you now remembrance to-morrow on the lousy knave, mine Host.

Caius. Dat is good, by gar, with all my heart.

Eva. A lousy knave! to have his gibes, and his mockeries. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. Mr. Page's *House.*

Enter Fenton *and* Mrs. Anne Page.

Fent. I see I cannot get thy father's love;
Therefore no more turn me to him, sweet Nan.

Anne. Alas! how then?

Fent. He doth object I am too great of birth,
And that, my state being gall'd with my expence,
I seek to heal it only by his wealth.
Besides these, other bars he lays before me,
My riots past, my wild societies;
And tells me, 'tis a thing impossible
I should love thee but as a property.

Anne. May be, he tells you true.

Fent. No, Heav'n so speed me in my time to come:
Albeit, I will confess, thy father's wealth
Was the first motive that I woo'd thee, Anne:
Yet, wooing thee, I found thee of more value
Than stamps in gold, or sums in sealed bags;
And 'tis the very riches of thyself
That now I aim at.

Anne. Gentle Mr. Fenton,
Yet seek my father's love, still seek it, Sir;
If opportunity and humblest suit
Cannot attain it, why, then—hark you hither.

Enter Shallow, Slender, *and* Mrs. Quickly.

Shal. Break their talk, Mrs. Quickly.
My kinsman shall speak for himself.

Slen. I'll make a shaft or a bolt on it: 'D'slid, 'tis but venturing.

Shal. Be not dismay'd.

Slen. No, she shall not dismay me:
I care not for that, but that I am afeard.

Quic. Hark'e; Mr. Slender would speak a word with you.

Anne. I come to him. This is my father's choice.
O what a world of vile ill-favour'd faults
Look handsome in three hundred pounds a year!

Quic. And how does good Master Fenton?
Pray, you, a word with you.

Shal. She's coming: to her, coz.
O, boy, thou hadst a father!

Slen. I had a father, Mrs. Anne; my uncle can tell you good jests of him.—Pray you, uncle, tell Mrs. Anne the jest, how my father stole two geese out of a pen, good uncle.

Shal. Mrs. Anne, my cousin loves you.

Slen. Ay, that I do, as well as I love any woman in Gloucestershire.

Shal. He will maintain you like a gentlewoman.

Slen. Ay, that I will; come cut and long tail, under the degree of a squire.

Shal. He will make you a hundred and fifty pounds a year jointure.

Anne. Good Master Shallow, let him woo for himself.

Shal. Marry, I thank you for it; I thank you for that good comfort; she calls you, Coz. I'll leave you.

Anne. Now, Master Slender.

Slen. Now, good Mrs. Anne.

Anne. What is your will?

Slen. My will? Od's heart-lings, that's a pretty jest, indeed: I ne'er made my will yet, I thank Heav'n; I am not such a sickly creature, I give Heav'n praise.

Anne. I mean, Mr. Slender, what would you with me?

Slen. Truly, for my own part, I would little or nothing with you; your father and my uncle have made motions; if it be my luck, so; if not, happy man be his dole! They can tell you how things go, better than I can; you may ask your father—here he comes.

Enter Page *and* Mrs Page.

Page. Now, Master Slender.—Love him, daughter Anne.——
Why, how now? What does Master Fenton here?
You wrong me, Sir, thus still to haunt my house:
I told you, Sir, my daughter is dispos'd of.

Fent. Nay, Master Page, be not impatient.

Mrs. Page. Good Master Fenton, come not to my child.

Page. She is no match for you.

Fent. Sir, will you hear me?

Page. No, good Master Fenton.——
Come, Master Shallow—Come, son, Slender, in.—
Knowing my mind, you wrong me, Master Fenton.
[*Exeunt* Page, Shallow, *and* Slender.

Quic. Speak to Mrs. Page.

Fent. Good Mrs. Page, for that I love your daughter,
In such a righteous fashion as I do,
Let me have your good will.

Anne. Good mother, do not marry me to yon fool.

Mrs. Page. I mean it not, I seek you a better husband.

Quic. That is my master, Master Doctor.

Anne. Alas, I had rather be set quick i' th' earth.

Mrs. Page. Come, trouble not yourself good Master Fenton.
I will not be your friend, nor enemy:
My daughter will I question how she loves you;
And as I find her, so am I affected.
Till then farewel, Sir; she must needs go in,
Her father will be angry.
[*Exeunt* Mrs. Page *and* Anne.

Fent. Farewel, gentle mistress—farewel, Nan.

Quic. This is my doing, now. Nay, said I, will you
Cast away your child on a fool and a physician?
Look on Master Fenton: this is my doing.

Fent. I thank thee; and I pray thee, once to-night,

Give my ſweet Nan this ring.——There's for thy pains. [*Exit.*

Quic. Now Heaven ſend thee good fortune! A kind heart he hath; a woman would run through fire and water, for ſuch a kind heart. But yet, I would my maſter had Mrs. Anne, or I would Mr. Slender had her; or, in ſooth, I would Mr. Fenton had her. I will do what I can for them all three, for ſo I have promiſed; and I'll be as good as my word, but ſpeciouſly for Mr. Fenton. Well, I muſt of another errand to Sir John Falſtaff, from my two miſtreſſes; what a beaſt am I, to ſlack it!

SCENE V. *The* Garter Inn.

Enter Falſtaff *and* Bardolph.

Fal. Bardolph!

Bard. Here, Sir.

Fal. Go fetch me a quart of ſack, and put a toaſt in't. [*Exit* Bardolph.] Have I liv'd to be carry'd in a baſket, like a barrow of butcher's offal, and to be thrown into the Thames? Well, if I be ſerved ſuch another trick, I'll have my brains ta'en out and butter'd, and give them to a dog for a new-year's gift. The rogues ſleighted me into the river, with as little remorſe as they would have drown'd a bitch's blind puppies, fifteen i' th' litter; and you may know, by my ſize, that I have a kind of alacrity in ſinking: if the bottom were as deep as hell, I ſhould down. I had been drown'd, but the ſhore was ſhelvy and ſhallow; a death that I abhor; for the water ſwells a man: and what a thing would I have been when I had been ſwelled! I ſhould have been a mountain of mummy.

Enter Bardolph.

Bard. Here's Mrs. Quickly, Sir, to ſpeak with you.

Fal. Come, let me pour in ſome ſack to the Thames water; for my belly's as cold, as if I had ſwallow'd ſnow-balls for pills. Call her in.

Bard. Come in, woman.

Enter Mrs. Quickly.

Quic. By your leave: I cry your mercy. Give your worſhip good morrow.

Fal. Bardolph! Go brew me a pottle of ſack, finely.

Bard. With eggs, Sir?

Fal. Simple of itſelf: I'll no pullet-ſperm in my brewage.—How now?

Quic. Marry, Sir, I come to your worſhip, from Mrs. Ford.

Fal. Mrs. Ford? I have had ford enough; I was thrown into the ford; I have my belly-full of ford.

Quic. Alas the day! good heart, that was not her fault: She does ſo take on with her men; they miſtook their erection.

Fal. So did I mine, to build on a fooliſh woman's promiſe.

Quic. Well, ſhe laments, Sir, for it, that it would yearn your heart to ſee it. Her huſband goes this morning a birding; ſhe deſires you once more to come to her, between eight and nine. I muſt carry her word, quickly: ſhe'll make you amends, I warrant you.

Fal. Well, I will viſit her; tell her ſo; and bid her think what a man is: let her conſider his frailty, and then judge of my merit.

Quic. I will tell her.

Fal. Do ſo. Between nine and ten, ſay'ſt thou?

Quic. Eight and nine, Sir.

Fal. Well, be gone, I will not miſs her.

Quic. Peace be with you, Sir. [*Exit.*

Fal. I marvel, I hear not of Maſter Brook; he ſent me word to ſtay within—I like his money well.—Oh, here he comes.

Enter Ford.

Ford. Bleſs you, Sir.

Fal. Now, Maſter Brook, you come to know what hath paſs'd between me and Ford's wife.

Ford. That, indeed, Sir John, is my buſineſs.

Fal. Maſter Brook, I will not lye to you; I was at her houſe the hour ſhe appointed me.

Ford. And, you ſped, Sir?

Fal. Very ill-favour'dly, Maſter Brook.

Ford. How, Sir! did ſhe change her determination?

Fal. No, Maſter Brook; but the peaking cornuto, her huſband, Maſter Brook, dwelling in a continual larum of jealouſy, comes in the inſtant of our encounter, after we had embraced, kiſſed, proteſted, and as it were, ſpoke the prologue of our comedy; and at his heels a rabble of his companions, thither provoked and inſtigated by his diſtemper, and forſooth, to ſearch his houſe for his wife's love.

Ford. What, while you were there?

Fal. While I was there.

Ford. And did he ſearch for you, and could not find you?

Fal. You ſhall hear. As good luck would have it, comes in one Mrs. Page, gives intelligence of Ford's approach, and by her invention, and Ford's wife's direction, they convey'd me into a buck-baſket.

Ford. A buck-baſket?

Fal. Yea, a buck-baſket; rammed me in with foul ſhirts and ſmocks, ſocks, foul ſtockings, and greaſy napkins, that, Maſter Brook, there was the rankeſt compound of villainous ſmell that ever offended noſtril.

Ford. And how long lay you there?

Fal. Nay, you ſhall hear, Maſter Brook, what I have ſuffer'd to bring this woman to evil, for your good. Being thus cramm'd in the baſket, a couple of Ford's knaves, his hinds, were call'd forth by their miſtreſs, to carry me, in the name of foul clothes, to Datchet Lane. They took me on their ſhoulders, met the jealous knave, their maſter, at the door, who aſked them once or twice what they had in their baſket: I quaked for fear, leſt the lunatic knave would have ſearched it; but fate, ordaining he ſhould be a cuckold, held his hand. Well, on went he, for a ſearch; and away went I, for foul clothes. But mark the ſequel, Maſter Brook, I ſuffered the pangs of three egregious deaths: Firſt, an intolerable fright, to be detected by a jealous rotten bell-weather; next to be compaſſed like a good bilbo, in the circumference of a peck, hilt to point, heel to head; and then to be ſtopt, like a ſtrong diſtillation, with ſtinking clothes, that fretted in their own greaſe: think of that; a man of my kidney; think of that, that am as ſubject to heat, as butter; a man of continual diſſolution and thaw; it was a miracle to 'ſcape ſuffocation. And in the height of this bath, when I was more than half ſtewed in greaſe, like a Dutch diſh, to be thrown into the Thames, and cool'd, glowing hot, in that ſurge, like a horſe-ſhoe; think of that; hiſſing hot; think of that, Maſter Brook.

Ford. In good ſadneſs, Sir, I am ſorry that for my ſake you have ſuffer'd all this. My ſuit is then deſperate; you'll undertake her no more?

Fal. Maſter Brook, I will be thrown into Ætna, as I have been into the Thames, ere I will leave her thus. Her huſband is this morning gone a birding; I have received from her another embaſſy

meeting: 'Twixt eight and nine is the hour, Master Brook.

Ford. 'Tis past eight, already, Sir.

Fal. Is it? I will then address me to my appointment. Come to me at your convenient leisure, and you shall know how I speed; and the conclusion shall be crowned with your enjoying her. Adieu, you shall have her, Master Brook; Master Brook, you shall cuckold Ford. [*Exit.*

Ford. Hum! ha! Is this a vision? Is this a dream? Do I sleep? Master Ford, awake; awake, Master Ford; there's a hole made in your best coat, Master Ford; this 'tis to be married! this 'tis to have linen and buck-baskets! Well, I will proclaim myself what I am; I will now take the lecher; he is at my house; he cannot 'scape me, 'tis impossible he should; he cannot creep into a half-penny purse, nor into a pepper-box. But, lest the devil that guides him should aid him, I will search impossible places. Though what I am I cannot avoid, yet to be what I would not, shall not make me tame; if I have horns to make one mad, let the proverb go with me, I'll be horn mad. [*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. Ford's *House.*

Enter Falstaff *and* Mrs. Ford.

Fal. MISTRESS Ford, your sorrow hath eaten up my sufferance; I see you are obsequious in your love, and I profess requital to a hair's breadth; not only, Mrs. Ford, in the simple office of love, but in the accoustrement, compliment, and ceremony of it. But are you sure of your husband, now?

Mrs. Ford. He's a birding, sweet Sir John.

Mrs. Page. [*Within.*] What, hoa, gossip Ford! what hoa!

Mrs. Ford. Step into the chamber, Sir John. [*Exit* Falstaff.

Enter Mistress Page.

Mrs. Page. How now, sweet-heart, who's at home, besides yourself?

Mrs. Ford. Why none but mine own people.

Mrs. Page. Indeed?

Mrs Ford. No, certainly—Speak louder.

Mrs. Page. Truly I am glad you have nobody here.

Mrs. Ford. Why?

Mrs. Page. Why, woman, your husband is in his old lunes again; he so takes on, yonder, with my husband; so rails against all married mankind; I am glad the fat knight is not here.

Mrs. Ford. Why, does he talk of him?

Mrs. Page. Of none but him, and swears he was carried out, the last time he searched for him, in a basket; protests to my husband he is now here; and hath drawn him and the rest of their company from their sport, to make another experiment of his suspicion; but I am glad the knight is not here; now he shall see his own foolery.

Mrs. Ford. How near is he, Mrs. Page?

Mrs. Page. Hard by, at street's end, he will be here anon.

Mrs. Ford. I am undone; the knight is here.

Mrs. Page. Why then thou are utterly shamed, and he's but a dead man. What a woman are you! away with him, away with him: better shame than murder.

Mrs. Ford. Which way should he go? How should I bestow him, shall I put him into the basket again?

Enter Falstaff.

Fal. No, I'll come no more i'th' basket: May I not go out, ere he come?

Mrs. Page. Alas, alas! three of Master Ford's brothers watch the door with pistols, that none should issue out; otherwise you might slip away, ere he came: but what make you here!

Fal. I'll creep up into the chimney.

Mrs. Ford. There they always used to discharge their birding pieces; creep into the kiln-hole.

Fal. Where is it?

Mrs. Ford. He will seek there, on my word; neither press, coffer, chest, trunk, well, vault, but he hath had an abstract for the remembrance of such places, and goes to them by his note; there is no hiding you in the house.

Fal. I'll go out, then.

Mrs. Ford. If you go out in your own semblance, you die, Sir John, unless you go out disguised. How might we disguise him?

Mrs. Page. Alas the day, I know not: there is no woman's gown big enough for him, otherwise he might put on a hat, a muffler, and a kerchief, and so escape.

Fal. Good heart, devise something; any extremity, rather than mischief.

Mrs. Ford. My maid's aunt, the fat woman of Brentford, has a gown above.

Mrs. Page. On my word, it will serve him; she's as big as he is; and there's her thrumb hat, and her muffler too. Run up, Sir John.

Mrs. Ford. Go, go, sweet Sir John; Mrs. Page and I will look some linen for your head.

Mrs. Page. Quick, quick, we'll come dress you straight; put on the gown the while. [*Ex.* Falstaff.

Mrs. Ford. I would my husband would meet him in this shape: he cannot abide the old woman of Brentford; he swears she's a witch, forbade her my house, and hath threatened to beat her. But is my husband coming?

Mrs. Page. Ay, in good sadness is he; and talks of the basket too, however he hath had intelligence.

Mrs. Ford. We'll try that; for I'll appoint my men to carry the basket again, to meet him at the door with it, as they did last time.

Mrs. Page. Nay, but he'll be here, presently; let's go dress him like the witch of Brentford.

Mrs. Ford. I'll first direct my men what they shall do with the basket; go up, I'll bring linen for him, straight. [*Exit* Mrs. Page.—Here, John, Robert. Go, Sirs, take the basket again on your shoulders; your master is hard at door; if he bid you set it down, obey him; quickly, dispatch. [*Exit* Mrs. Ford.

[*Servants take up the basket.*

Enter Ford, Shallow, Page, Caius, *and* Evans.

Ford. Ay, but if it prove true, Master Page, have you any way then to unfool me again? Set down the basket, villains; somebody, call my wife, youth. In a basket! Oh, you panderly rascals, there's a knot, a gang, a pack, a conspiracy against me! now shall the devil be shamed. What, wife! I say; come, come forth; behold what honest clothes you send forth to bleaching.

Page. Why this is extravagance, Master Ford; you are not to go loose, any longer; you must be pinioned.

Eva. Why this is lunatics; this is mad as a mad dog.

Shal. Indeed, Master Ford, this is not well indeed.

Ford. So say I too, Sir, [*Enter* Mrs. Ford.] Come hither, Mrs. Ford, Mrs. Ford, the honest

woman, the modeſt wife, the virtuous creature, that hath the jealous fool to her huſband; I ſuſpect without cauſe, miſtreſs, do I?

Mrs. Ford. Heav'n be my witneſs, you do, if you ſuſpect me in any diſhoneſty.

Ford. Well ſaid, brazen-face, hold it out: come forth, ſirrah. [*Pulls the clothes out of the baſket.*

Mrs. Ford. Are you not aſhamed? Let the clothes alone.

Ford. I ſhall find you, anon.

Eva. 'Tis unreaſonable; will you take up your wife's cloaths? come away.

Ford. Empty the baſket, I ſay,

Mrs. Ford. Why, man, why?

Ford. Maſter Page, as I am a man, there was one convey'd out of my houſe, yeſterday, in this baſket; why may not he be there again? In my houſe I am ſure he is; my intelligence is true, my jealouſy is reaſonable; pluck me out all the linen.

Mrs. Ford. If you find a man there, he ſhall die a flea's death.

Page. Here's no man.

Shal. By my fidelity, this is not well, Maſter Ford; this wrongs you.

Eva. Maſter Ford, you muſt pray, and not follow the imaginations of your own heart; this is jealouſies.

Ford. Well, he is not here I ſeek for.

Page. No, nor no where elſe, but in your brain.

Ford. Help to ſearch my houſe, this one time; if I find not what I ſeek, ſhew no colour for my extremity; let me for ever be your table-ſport; let them ſay of me, "as jealous as Ford, that ſearched a hollow walnut for his wife's love." Satisfy me once more, once more ſearch with me.

Mrs. Ford. What hoa, Mrs. Page! come you and the old woman down; my huſband will come into the chamber.

Ford. Old woman! what old woman's that?

Mrs. Ford. Why, it is my maid's aunt of Brentford.

Ford. A witch, a quean, an old cozening quean! have I not forbid her my houſe? ſhe comes of errands, does ſhe? Come down, you witch, you hag you, come down, I ſay.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, good ſweet huſband; good gentlemen, let him not ſtrike the old woman.

Enter Falſtaff, *in Woman's Clothes.*

Mrs. Page. Come, mother Prat, come, give me your hand.

Ford. I'll Prat her; out of my door, you witch, [*Beats him*]—you hag, you baggage, you polecat, out, out, out; I'll conjure you, I'll fortune-tell you. [*Exit* Falſtaff.

Mrs. Page. Are you not aſhamed? I think you have kill'd the poor woman.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, he will do it—'tis a goodly credit for you.

Ford. Hang her, witch.

Eva. By yea and no, I think the 'oman is a witch, indeed: I like not when a 'oman has a great peard: I ſpy a great peard under her muffler.

Ford. Will you follow, gentlemen? I beſeech you follow; ſee but the iſſue of my jealouſy; if I cry out thus upon no trial, never truſt me when I open again.

Page. Let's obey his humour, a little further: come, gentlemen. [*Exeunt.*

Mrs. Page. Truſt me, he beat him moſt pitifully.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, by the maſs, that he did not; he beat him moſt unpitifully, methought.

Mrs. Page. I'll have the cudgel hallowed, and hung o'er the altar; it hath done meritorious ſervice.

Mrs. Ford. What think you? May we, with the warrant of woman-hood, and the witneſs of a good conſcience, purſue him with any further revenge?

Mrs. Page. The ſpirit of wantonneſs is ſure ſcared out of him.

Mrs. Ford. Shall we tell our huſbands how we have ſerved him?

Mrs. Page. Yes, by all means; if it be but to ſcrape the figures out of your huſband's brain. If they can find in their hearts the poor unvirtuous fat knight ſhall be any farther afflicted, we two will ſtill be the miniſters.

Mrs. Ford. I'll warrant they'll have him publickly ſham'd, and methink there would be no period to the jeſt ſhould he not be ſo.

Mrs. Page. Come, to the forge with it, then ſhape it; I would not have things cool. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The Garter Inn.*

Enter Hoſt *and* Bardolph.

Bar. Sir, the German deſires to have three of your horſes; the duke himſelf will be to-morrow at court, and they are going to meet him.

Hoſt. What duke ſhould that be comes ſo ſecretly? I hear not of him in the court: let me ſpeak with the gentlemen; they ſpeak Engliſh.

Bar. Sir, I'll call them to you.

Hoſt. They ſhall have my horſes; but I'll make them pay; I'll ſauce them. They have had my houſe a week at command, I have turned away my other gueſts; they muſt compt off; I'll ſauce them; come. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. Ford's *Houſe.*

Enter Page, Ford, Mrs. Page, Mrs. Ford, *and* Evans.

Eva. 'Tis one of the beſt diſcretions of a 'oman, as ever I did look upon.

Page. And did he ſend you both theſe letters at an inſtant?

Mrs. Page. Within a quarter of an hour.

Ford. Pardon me, wife; henceforth, do what thou I rather will ſuſpect the ſun with cold, [wilt; Than thee with wantonneſs; now doth thy honour In him that was of late an heretic, ſtand, As firm of faith.

Page. 'Tis well, 'tis well; no more.
Be not as extreme in ſubmiſſion as in offence,
But let our plot go forward: let our wives,
Yet once again, to make us public ſport,
Appoint a meeting with this old fat fellow,
Where we may take him, and diſgrace him for it.

Ford. There is no better way than that they ſpoke of.

Page. How? to ſend him word they'll meet him in the park, at midnight; Fy, fy, he'll never come.

Eva. You ſay he hath been thrown into a river; and hath been grievouſly beaten, as an old 'oman; methinks there ſhould be terrors in him, that he ſhould not come; methinks his fleſh is puniſhed, he ſhall have no deſires.

Page. So think I too.

Mrs. Ford. Deviſe but how you'll uſe him when he comes; and let us two deviſe to bring him thither.

Mrs. Page. There is an old tale goes, that Herne the hunter,
Sometime a keeper here in Windſor foreſt,
Doth all the winter time, at ſtill of midnight,
Walk round about an oak, with ragged horns;
You've heard of ſuch a ſpirit, and well you know
The ſuperſtitious, idle-headed Eld,

Receiv'd, and did deliver to our age,
This tale of Herne the hunter, for a truth.

Page. Why yet there want not many, that do fear
In deep of night to walk by this Herne's oak;
But what of this?

Mrs. Ford. Marry, this is our device,
That Falstaff at this oak shall meet with us.

Page. Well, let it not be doubted but he'll come.
And in this shape, when you have brought him hither,
What shall be done with him? What is your plot?

Mrs. Page. That likewise we have thought upon.

Eva. Let us about it;
It is admirable pleasures, and ferry honest knaveries.

[*Exeunt* Page, Ford, *and* Evans.

SCENE IV. *The Garter Inn.*

Enter Host *and* Simple.

Host. What wouldst thou have, boor? what, thick-skin? speak, breathe, discuss; brief, short, quick, snap.

Sim. Marry, Sir, I come to speak with Sir John Falstaff, from Mr. Slender.

Host. There's his chamber, his house, his castle, his standing-bed and truckle-bed; 'tis painted about with the story of the Prodigal, fresh and new: go, knock and call! he'll speak like an Anthropophaginian unto thee; knock, I say.

Simp. There's an old woman, a fat woman, gone up into his chamber; I'll be so bold as to stay, Sir, till she come down; I come to speak with her, indeed.

Host. Ha! a fat woman? the knight may be robb'd: I'll call.—Bully knight! bully Sir John! speak from thy lungs military: art thou there? It is thine Host, thine Ephesian, calls,

Enter Falstaff.

Fal. How now, mine Host?

Host. Here's a Bohemian Tartar tarries the coming down of thy fat woman: let her descend, bully, let her descend; my chambers are honourable: fye, privacy! fye.

Fal. There was, mine Host, an old fat woman, even now with me; but she's gone.

Sim. Pray you, Sir, was't not the wise woman of Brentford?

Fal. Ay, marry was it, muscel-shell, what would you with her?

Sim. My master, Sir, my master Slender, sent to her (seeing her go thro' the street) to know, Sir, whether one Nym, Sir, that beguil'd him of a chain, had the chain or no.

Fal. I spake with the old woman about it.

Sim. And what says she, I pray, Sir?

Fal. Marry, she says, that the very same man that beguil'd Master Slender of his chain, cozen'd him of it.

Sim. I would I could have spoken with the woman herself. I had other things to have spoken with her too, from him.

Fal. What are they? let us know.

Host. Ay, come; quick.

Simp. I may not conceal them, Sir.

Host. Conceal 'em, or thou dy'st.

Simp. Why, Sir, they were nothing but about Mrs. Anne Page, to know if it were my master's fortune to have her or no.

Fal. 'Tis, 'tis his fortune.

Sim. What, Sir?

Fal. To have her, or no: go, say the woman told me so.

Sim. May I be bold to say so, Sir?

Fal. Ay. Sir; like who more bold.

Sim. I thank your worship: I shall make my master glad with these tidings. [*Exit* Simple.

Host. Thou art clerkly; thou art clerkly, Sir John: was there a wise woman with thee?

Fal. Ay, that there was, mine Host, one that hath taught me more wit than ever I learn'd before in my life; and I paid nothing for it neither, but was paid for my learning.—[*Exit* Host.] If it should come to the ear of the court, how I have been transformed, and how my transformation hath been washed and cudgelled, they would melt me out of my fat, drop by drop, and liquor fishermen's boots with it. I warrant, they would whip me with their fine wits, till I were as crest-fall'n as a dry'd pear. I never prosper'd since I forswore myself at Primero. Well, if my wind were but long enough to say my prayers, I would repent.—Now, whence come you?

Enter Mrs. Quickly.

Quic. From the two parties, forsooth.

Fal. The devil take one party, and his dam the other, and so they shall be both bestowed; I have suffered more for their sakes, more than the villainous inconstancy of man's disposition is able to bear.

Quic. And have not they suffered? yes, I warrant, speciously one of them; Mrs. Ford, good heart, is beaten black and blue, that you cannot see a white spot about her.

Fal. What, tell'st thou me of black and blue! I was beaten myself into all the colours of the rainbow; and I was like to be apprehended for the witch of Brentford; but that my admirable dexterity of wit, counterfeiting the action of a mad woman, delivered me, the knave, constable, had set me i' th' stocks, i' th' common stocks, for a witch.

Quic. Sir, let me speak with you, in your chamber; you shall hear how things go, and, I warrant, to your content. Here is a letter will say somewhat.—Good hearts, what ado is here to bring you together.

Fal. Come up into my chamber. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I. *The* Garter Inn.

Enter Falstaff *and* Mrs. Quickly.

Fal. PR'YTHEE, no more prattling; go, I'll hold. This is the third time; I hope good luck lies in odd numbers; away, go; they say there is divinity in odd numbers, either in nativity, chance, or death; away.

Quic. I'll provide you a chain, and I'll do what I can to get you a pair of horns.

[*Exeunt* Mrs. Quickly.

Fal. Away, I say, time wears; hold up your head, and mince.———

Enter Ford.

How now, Master Brook? Master Brook, the matter will be known to-night, or never. Be you in the park about midnight, at Herne's oak, and you shall see wonders.

Ford. Went you not to her yesterday, Sir, as you told me you had appointed?

Fal. I went to her, Master Brook, as you see, like a poor old man; but I came from her, Master Brook, like a poor old woman. The same knave, Ford, her husband, hath the finest mad devil of jealousy in him, Master Brook, that ever govern'd

frenzy. I will tell you, he beat me grievously, in the shape of a woman; for in the shape of a man, Master Brook, I fear not Goliah with a weaver's beam. Master Brook, since I pluckt geese, play'd truant, and whipt top, I knew not what 'twas to be beaten till lately. Follow me, I'll tell you strange things of this knave Ford, on whom to-night I will be revenged, and I will deliver his wife into your hands. Follow; strange things in hand, Master Brook; follow. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. Windsor *Park.*

Enter Page, Shallow, *and* Slender.

Page. Come, come, we'll couch i'th' castle-ditch, till we see the light of our fairies. Remember, son Slender, my daughter.

Slen Ay, forsooth, I have spoke with her, and we have a nay-word how to know one another. I come to her in white, and cry mum, she cries budget, and by that we know one another.

Shal. That's good too; but what needs either your mum, or her budget; The white will decypher her well enough. It hath struck ten o'clock.

Page. The night is dark, light and spirits will become it well; heaven prosper our sport! No man means evil, but the devil, and we shall know him by his horns. Let's away; follow me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter Mrs. Page, Mrs. Ford, *and* Caius.

Mrs. Page. Mr. Doctor, my daughter is in green: when you see your time, take her by the hand, away with her to the Deanry, and dispatch it quickly; go before into the park; we two must go together.

Caius. I know vat I have to do; adieu.

Mrs. Page. Fare you well, Sir.—[*Exit* Caius.] My husband will not rejoice so much at the abuse of Falstaff, as he will chafe at the Doctor's marrying my daughter: but 'tis no matter; better a little chiding, than a great deal of heart-breaking.

Mrs. Ford. Where is Nan, now, and her troop of fairies, and the Welsh devil, Evans?

Mrs. Page. They are all couch'd in a pit, hard by Herne's oak, with obscur'd lights; which at the very instant of Falstaff's and our meeting, they will at once display to the knight.

Mrs. Ford. That cannot chuse but amaze him.

Mrs. Page. If he be not amazed, he will be mock'd.

Mrs. Ford. We'll betray him finely.

Mrs. Page. Against such lewdsters,
Those that betray them do no treachery.

Mrs. Ford. The hour draws on; to the oak, to the oak. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV,

Enter Evans, *and Fairies.*

Eva. Trib, trib, fairies; come, and remember your parts; be bold, I pray you, follow me into the pit, and when I give the watch-'ords, do as I bid you: come, come; trib, trib. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

Enter Falstaff.

Fal. The Windsor bell hath struck twelve, the minute draws on; I am here a Windsor stag, and the fattest, I think, i'th' forest. Who comes here? my doe?

Enter Mrs. Ford *and* Mrs. Page.

Mrs. Ford. Sir John? Art thou there, my deer? My male-deer?

Fal. My doe! Let the sky rain potatoes, let it thunder to the tune of Green Sleeves, hail kissing-comfits, and snow eringoes; let there come a tempest of provocation, I will shelter me here.

Mrs. Ford. Mrs. Page is come with me, sweet heart.

Fal. Divide me like a bride buck, each a haunch; I will keep my sides to myself, my shoulder for the fellow of this walk, and my horns I bequeath your husbands. Am I a woodman, ha? Speak I like Herne the hunter? why, now is Cupid a child of conscience, he makes restitution. As I am a true spirit, welcome. [*Noise within.*

Mrs. Page. Alas! what noise?

Mrs. Ford. Heav'n forgive our sins!

Fal. What shall this be?

Mrs. Ford. Mrs. Page, away, away. [*The women run out.*

Enter Evans *and Fairies, they pinch* Falstaff, *and* exeunt.

Enter Page, Ford, *&c. They lay hold of him.*

Page. Nay, do not fly, I think we have watch'd you now:
Will none but Herne the hunter serve your turn?

Mrs. Page. I pray you, come; hold up the jest no higher.
Now, good Sir John, how like you Windsor wives?
See you these, husbands? Do not these fair yoaks
Become the forest better than the town?

Ford. Now, Sir, who's a cuckold, now?
Master Brook, Falstaff's a knave, a cuckoldly knave,
Here are his horns, Master Brook.
And, Master Brook, he hath enjoy'd nothing of Ford's,
But his buck-basket, his cudgel, and twenty pounds of money, which must be paid to Master Brook; his horses are arrested for it, Master Brook.

Mrs. Ford. Sir John, we have had ill luck, we could never meet. I will never take you for my love again, but I will always count you my dear.

Fal. I do begin to perceive that I am made an ass.

Ford. Ay, and an ox too: both the proofs are extant.

Fal. And these are not fairies?
I was three or four times in the thought they were not fairies; and yet the guiltiness of my mind, the sudden surprize of my powers, drove the grossness of the foppery into a received belief, that they were fairies. See now, how wit may be made a jack-a-lent, when 'tis upon ill employment.

Eva. Sir John Falstaff, serve Heav'n, and leave your desires, and fairies will not pinse you.

Ford. Well said, Fairy Hugh.

Eva. And leave your jealousies too, I pray you.

Ford. I will never mistrust my wife again, till thou art able to woo her in good English.

Fal. Have I laid my brain in the sun and dry'd it, that it wants matter to prevent so gross o'erreaching as this; Am I ridden with a Welsh goat, too? 'Tis time I were choak'd with a piece of toasted cheese.

Eva. Seese is not good to give putter; your pelly is all putter.

Fal Seese and putter? Have I liv'd to stand in the taunt of one that makes fritters of English?

Mrs. Page. Why, Sir John, do you think, though we would have thrust virtue out of our hearts by the head and shoulders, that ever the devil could have made you our delight?

Mrs. Ford. What a hodge pudding? A bag of flax?

Mrs. Page. A puft man?

Page. Old, cold, wither'd, and of intolerable entrails?

Ford. And one that is as slanderous as Satan?

Page. Old, and as poor as Job.

Ford. And as wicked as his wife.

Eva. And given to fornications, and to taverns, and sack, and wine, metheglins, and to drinkings,

and ſwearings, ſtarings, pribbles and prabbles?

Fal. Well, I am your theme; you have the ſtart of me, I am dejected; I am not able to anſwer the Welſh flannel: ignorance itſelf is a plummer o'er me, uſe me as you will.

Ford. Marry, Sir, we'll bring you to Windſor, to one Mr. Brook, that you have cozen'd of money, to whom you ſhould have been a pander: over and above that you have ſuffer'd, I think to repay the money will be a biting affliction.

Page. Yet be chearful, knight, thou ſhalt eat a poſſet, to-night, at my houſe, where I will deſire thee to laugh at my wife, that now laughs at thee. Tell her, Mr. Slender hath marry'd her daughter.

Mrs. Page. Doctors doubt that;
If Anne Page be my daughter, ſhe is, by this, Doctor Caius's wife.

Enter Slender.

Slen. What hoe! hoe! Father Page!

Page. Son! How now! How now, ſon?
Have you diſpatch'd!

Slen. Diſpatch'd! I'll make the beſt in Gloceſterſhire know on't: would I were hang'd-la, elſe.

Page. Of what, ſon?

Slen. I came yonder at Eaton, to marry Mrs. Anne Page, and ſhe's a great lubberly boy. If it had not been i'th' church, I would have ſwinge'd him, or he ſhould have ſwinge'd me. If I did not think it had been Anne Page, would I might never ſtir, and 'tis a poſt-maſter's boy.

Page. Upon my life then you took the wrong.

Slen. What need you tell me that? I think ſo, when I took a boy for a girl; if I had been marry'd to him, for all he was in woman's apparel, I would not have had him.

Page. Why, this is your own folly.
Did not I tell you how you ſhould know my daughter by her garments?

Slen. I went to her in white, and cry'd mum, and ſhe cry'd budget, as Anne and I had appointed; and yet it was not Anne, but a poſt-maſter's boy.

Mrs. Page. Good George, be not angry; I knew of your purpoſe, turn'd my daughter into green, and indeed ſhe is now with the Doctor at the Deanry, and there married.

Enter Caius.

Caius. Vere is Mrs. Page? by gar, I am cozen'd; I ha' marry'd one garſoon, a boy; one peaſant, by gar. A boy; it is not Anne Page: by gar, I am cozen'd.

Mrs. Page. Why, did you take her in green?

Caius. Ay, by gar, and 'tis a boy; by gar, I'll raiſe all Windſor.

Ford. This is ſtrange! who hath got the right Anne?

Page. My heart miſgives me; here comes Mr. Fenton.

Enter Fenton *and* Anne Page.

How now, Mr. Fenton?

Anne. Pardon, good father; good my mother, pardon.

Page. Now, miſtreſs,
How chance you went not with Mr. Slender?

Mrs. Page. Why went you not with Mr. Doctor, maid?

Fent. You do amaze her. Hear the truth of it.
You would have marry'd her moſt ſhamefully,
Where there was no proportion held in love;
The truth is, ſhe and I, long ſince contracted,
Are now ſo ſure that nothing can diſſolve us.

Ford. Stand not amaz'd; here is no remedy.
In love, the heavens themſelves do guide the ſtate;
Money buys lands, wives are ſold by fate.

Fal. I am glad, though you have ta'en a ſpecial ſtand to ſtrike at me, that your arrow hath glanc'd.

Page. Well, what remedy? Fenton, heav'n give thee joy!
What cannot be eſchew'd, muſt be embrac'd.

Fal. When night-dogs run, all ſorts of deer are chac'd.

Mrs. Page. Well, I will muſe no farther, Mr. Fenton.
Heav'n give you many, many merry days!
Good huſband, let us every one go home,
And laugh this ſport o'er, by a country fire;
Sir John and all.

Ford. Let it be ſo, Sir John:
To Maſter Brook you yet ſhall hold your word;
For he to-night ſhall lie with Miſtreſs Ford.

[*Exeunt omnes.*